3 Eng Poetry vol 63.

MORAL ECLOGUES.

Vivere naturæ ſi convenienter oportet,—
—Noviſtine locum potiorem rure beato?

HOR. Epiſt. Lib. I. ep. x. l. 12.

At ſecura quies, et neſcia fallere vita,
Dives opum variarum; at latis otia fundis,
Speluncæ, vivique lacus; at frigida Tempe,
Mugituſque boum, molleſque ſub arbore ſomni
Non abſunt. Illic ſaltus, ac luſtra ferarum,
Et patiens operum parvoque aſſueta juventus,
Sacra deûm, ſanctique patres: extrema per illos
Juſtitia excedens terris veſtigia fecit.

VIRG. Georg. II. l. 467.

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MDCCLXXVIII.

MORAL

ECLOGUES.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The moſt rational definition of Paſtoral Poetry, ſeems to be that of the learned and ingenious Dr. JOHNSON, in the 37th Number of his RAMBLER. 'Paſtoral,' ſays he, 'being the repreſentation of an Action or Paſſion, by its 'effects on a Country Life, has nothing peculiar, but its 'confinement to Rural Imagery, without which it ceaſes 'to be Paſtoral.' This Theory the Author of the following Eclogues has endeavoured to exemplify.

ADVERTISHMENT.

ECLOGUE I.

THERON; or, the Praiſe of RURAL LIFE.

SCENE, a Heath:

Seaſon, SPRING; Time, MORNING.

FAIR Spring o'er Nature held her gentleſt ſway;
Fair Morn diffus'd around her brighteſt ray;
Thin miſts hung hovering on the diſtant trees,
Or roll'd from off the fields before the breeze.
The Shepherd THERON watch'd his fleecy train,
Beneath a broad oak, on the graſſy plain.
A heath's green wild lay pleaſant to his view,
With ſhrubs and field-flowers deck'd of varied hue:
There the tall thorn its ſilver bloom diſclos'd,
Here flexile broom's bright yellow interpos'd;
There purple orchis, here pale daiſies ſpread,
And ſweet May-lilies richeſt odour ſhed.
From many a copſe and bloſſom'd orchard near,
The voice of birds melodious charm'd the ear;

There ſhrill the lark and ſoft the linnet ſung,
And loud thro' air the throſtle's muſick rung.
The gentle Swain the chearful ſcene admir'd;
The chearful ſcene the ſong of Joy inſpir'd.
" Chant on," he cry'd, " ye warblers on the ſpray!
" Bleat on, ye flocks, that in the paſtures play!
" Low on, ye herds, that range the dewy vales!
" Murmur, ye rills! and whiſper ſoft, ye gales!
" How bleſt my lot, in theſe ſweet fields aſſign'd,
" Where Peace and Leiſure ſooth the tuneful mind;
" Where yet ſome pleaſing veſtiges remain
" Of unperverted Nature's golden reign,
" When Love and Virtue rang'd Arcadian ſhades,
" With undeſigning youths and artleſs maids!
" For us, though deſtin'd to a later time,
" A leſs luxuriant ſoil, leſs genial clime,
" For us the country boaſts enough to charm,
" In the wild woodland or the cultur'd farm.
" Come, CYNTHIO, come! in town no longer ſtay;
" From crouds, and noiſe, and folly, haſte away!
" The fields, the meads, the trees, are all in bloom,
" The vernal ſhow'rs awake a rich perfume.

" Where DAMON's manſion, by the glaſſy ſtream,
" Rears its white walls that thro' green willows gleam,
" Annual the neighbours hold their ſhearing-day;
" And blithe youths come, and nymphs in neat array:
" Thoſe ſhear their ſheep, upon the ſmooth turf laid,
" In the broad plane's or trembling poplar's ſhade;
" Theſe for their friends th' expected feaſt provide,
" Beneath cool bowers along th' incloſure's ſide.
" To view the toil, the glad repaſt to ſhare,
" Thy DELIA, my MELANIA, ſhall be there;
" Each, kind and faithful to her faithful ſwain,
" Loves the calm pleaſures of the paſtoral plain.
" Come, CYNTHIO, come! if towns and crouds invite,
" And noiſe and folly promiſe high delight;
" Soon the tir'd ſoul diſguſted turns from theſe—
" The rural proſpect, only, long can pleaſe!"

ECLOGUE II.

PALEMON; or, BENEVOLENCE.

SCENE, a Wood-ſide on the Brow of a Hill:
Seaſon, SUMMER; Time, FORENOON.

BRIGHT fleecy clouds flew ſcattering o'er the ſky,
And ſhorten'd ſhadows ſhew'd that noon was nigh;
When two young ſhepherds, in the upland ſhade,
Their liſtleſs limbs upon the greenſward laid.
Surrounding groves the wandering ſight confin'd—
All, ſave where, weſtward, one wide landſcape ſhin'd.
Down in the dale were neat incloſures ſeen,
The winding hedge-row, and the thicket green;
Rich marſhland next a gloſſy level ſhow'd,
And thro' grey willows ſilver rivers flow'd:
Beyond, high hills with towers and villas crown'd,
And waving foreſts, form'd the proſpect's bound.
Sweet was the covert where the Swains reclin'd!
There ſpread the wild roſe, there the woodbine twin'd;

There

There ſtood green fern; there, o'er the graſſy ground,
Sweet camomile and alehoof crept around;
And centaury red and yellow cinquefoil grew,
And ſcarlet campion, and cyanus blue;
And tufted thyme, and marjoram's purple bloom,
And ruddy ſtrawberries yielding rich perfume.
Gay flies their wings on each fair flower diſplay'd,
And labouring bees a lulling murmur made.
Along the brow a path delightful lay;
Slow by the youths PALEMON chanc'd to ſtray,
A Bard, who often, to the rural throng,
At vacant hours rehears'd the moral ſong!
The ſong the Shepherds crav'd; the Sage reply'd:
'As late my ſteps forſook the fountain ſide,
'Adown the green lane by the beechen grove,
'Their flocks young PIRONEL and LARVON drove;
'With us perchance they'll reſt awhile'—The Swains
Approach'd the ſhade; their ſheep ſpread o'er the plains:
Silent they view'd the venerable man,
Whoſe voice melodious thus the lay began.
'What ALCON ſung where Eveſham's vales extend,
'I ſing; ye Swains, your pleas'd attention lend!

'There

'There long with him the rural life I led,
'His fields I cultur'd, and his flocks I fed.
'Where, by the hamlet road upon the green,
'Stood pleaſant cots with trees diſpers'd between,
'Beſide his door, as, waving o'er his head,
'A lofty elm its ruſtling foliage ſpread,
'Frequent he ſat; while all the village train
'Preſs'd round his ſeat, and liſten'd to his ſtrain.
'And once of fair BENEVOLENCE he ſung,
'And thus the tuneful numbers left his tongue:
" Ye youth of Avon's banks, of Bredon's groves,
" Sweet ſcenes, where Plenty reigns, and Pleaſure roves!
" Woo to your bowers BENEVOLENCE the fair,
" Kind as your ſoil, and gentle as your air.
" She comes! her tranquil ſtep, and placid eye,
" Fierce Rage, fell Hate, and ruthleſs Avarice, fly.
" She comes! her heav'nly ſmiles, with powerful charm,
" Smooth Care's rough brow, and reſt Toil's weary arm.
" She comes! ye ſhepherds, importune her ſtay!
" While your fair farms exuberant wealth diſplay,
" While herds and flocks their annual increaſe yield,
" And yellow harveſts load the fruitful field;

" Beneath

" Beneath grim Want's inexorable reign,
" Pale Sickneſs, oft', and feeble Age complain!
" Why this unlike allotment, ſave to ſhow,
" That who poſſeſs, poſſeſs but to beſtow?"

PALEMON ceas'd.—' Sweet is the ſound of gales
' Amid green oſiers in the winding vales;
' Sweet is the lark's loud note on ſunny hills,
' What time fair Morn the ſky with fragrance fills;
' Sweet is the nightingale's love-ſoothing ſtrain,
' Heard by ſtill waters on the moonlight plain!
' But not the gales that thro' green oſiers play,
' Nor lark's nor nightingale's melodious lay,
' Pleaſe like ſmooth numbers by the Muſe inſpir'd!'—
LARVON reply'd, and homeward all retir'd.

ECLOGUE III.

ARMYN; or, THE DISCONTENTED.

SCENE, a Valley:

Seaſon, SUMMER; Time, AFTERNOON.

SUMMER o'er heav'n diffus'd ſereneſt blue,
And painted earth with many a pleaſing hue;
When ARMYN mus'd the vacant hour away,
Where willows o'er him wav'd their pendent ſpray.
Cool was the ſhade, and cool the paſſing gale,
And ſweet the proſpect of the adjacent vale:
The fertile ſoil, profuſe of plants, beſtow'd
The crowfoot's gold, the trefoil's purple ſhow'd,
And ſpiky mint rich fragrance breathing round,
And meadſweet tall with tufts of flowrets crown'd,
And comfry white, and hoary ſilver-weed,
The bending oſier, and the ruſtling reed.
There, where clear ſtreams about green iſlands ſpread,
Fair flocks and herds, the wealth of ARMYN, fed;

There, on the hill's ſoft ſlope, delightful view!
Fair fields of corn, the wealth of ARMYN, grew.
His ſturdy hinds, a ſlow laborious band,
Swept their bright ſcythes along the level land:
Blithe youths and maidens nimbly near them paſt
And the thick ſwarth in careleſs wind-rows caſt.
Full on the landſcape ſhone the weſtering ſun,
When thus the Swain's ſoliloquy begun.

'Haſte down, O Sun! and cloſe the tedious day:
'Time, to the unhappy, ſlowly moves away.
'Not ſo, to me, in RODEN's ſylvan bowers,
'Paſs'd youth's ſhort bliſsful reign of careleſs hours;
'When to my view the fancy'd Future lay,
'A region ever tranquil, ever gay.
'O then, what ardors did my breaſt inflame!
'What thoughts were mine, of friendſhip, love, and fame
'How taſteleſs life, now all its joys are try'd,
'And warm purſuits in dull repoſe ſubſide!'
He paus'd: his cloſing words ALBINO heard,
As down the ſtream his little boat he ſteer'd;
His hand releas'd the ſail, and dropt the oar,
And moor'd the light ſkiff on the ſedgy ſhore.

Ceaſe

'Ceaſe, gentle Swain,' he ſaid; 'no more, in vain,
'Thus make paſt pleaſure cauſe of preſent pain!
'Ceaſe, gentle Swain,' he ſaid; 'from thee, alone,
'Are youth's bleſt hours and fancy'd proſpects flown?
'Ah, no!— remembrance to my view reſtores
'Dear native fields, which now my ſoul deplores;
'Rich hills and vales, and pleaſant village ſcenes
'Of oaks whoſe wide arms ſtretch'd o'er daiſied greens,
'And wind-mill's ſails ſlow-circling in the breeze,
'And cottage-walls envelop'd half with trees—
'Sweet ſcenes, where Beauty met the raviſh'd ſight,
'And Muſick often gave the ear delight;
'Where DELIA's ſmile, and MIRA's tuneful ſong,
'And DAMON's converſe, charm'd the youthful throng!
'How chang'd, alas, how chang'd!—O'er all our plains,
'Proud NORVAL, now, in lonely grandeur reigns;
'His wide-ſpread park a waſte of verdure lies,
'And his vaſt villa's glittering roofs ariſe.
'For me, hard fate!—But ſay, ſhall I complain?
'Theſe limbs yet active Life's ſupport obtain.
'Let us, or good or evil as we ſhare,
'That thankful prize, and this with patience bear.'

The ſoft reproach touch'd ARMYN's gentle breaſt;
His alter'd brow a placid ſmile expreſt.
'Calm as clear ev'nings after vernal rains,
'When all the air a rich perfume retains,
'My mind,' ſaid he, 'its murmurs driv'n away,
'Feels Truth's full force, and bows to Reaſon's ſway!'
He ceas'd: the ſun, with horizontal beams,
Gilt the green mountains, and the glittering ſtreams.
Slow down the tide before the ſinking breeze,
ALBINO's white ſail gleam'd among the trees;
Slow down the tide his winding courſe he bore
To watry Talgar's aſpin-ſhaded ſhore.
Slow croſs the valley, to the ſouthern hill,
The ſteps of ARMYN ſought the diſtant vill,
Where thro' tall elms the moſs-grown turret roſe;
And his fair manſion offer'd ſweet repoſe.

ECLOGUE IV.

LYCORON; or, THE UNHAPPY.

SCENE, a Valley:

Seaſon, AUTUMN; Time, EVENING.

THE matron, Autumn, held her ſober reign
O'er fading foliage on the ruſſet plain:
Mild Evening came; the moon began to riſe,
And ſpread pale luſtre o'er unclouded ſkies.
'Twas ſilence all—ſave, where along the road
The ſlow wain grating bore its cumb'rous load;
Save, where broad rivers roll'd their waves away,
And ſcreaming herons ſought their watry prey—
When hapleſs DAMON, in Algorno's vale,
Pour'd his ſoft ſorrows on the paſſing gale.
'That grace of ſhape, that elegance of air,
'That blooming face ſo exquiſitely fair;
'That eye of brightneſs bright as morning's ray,
'That ſmile of ſoftneſs ſoft as cloſing day,

'Which bound my ſoul to thee; all, all are fled—
'All loſt in dreary manſions of the dead!
'Ev'n him, whom diſtance from his Love divides,
'Toil'd on ſcorch'd ſands, or toſt on rolling tides,
'Kind Hope ſtill chears; ſtill paints, to ſooth his pain,
'The happy moment when they meet again.
'Far worſe, my lot! Of Hope bereft, I mourn!—
'The parted ſpirit never can return!'
Thus DAMON ſpoke, as in the cypreſs gloom
He hung lamenting o'er his DELIA's tomb.
In the ſtill valley where they wander'd near,
Two gentle Shepherds chanc'd his voice to hear:
LYCORON's head Time's hand had ſilver'd o'er,
And MILO's cheek Youth's roſy bluſhes bore.
'How mournful,' ſaid LYCORON, 'flows that ſtrain!
'It brings paſt miſeries to my mind again.
'When the blithe Village, on the vernal green,
'Sees its fair Daughters in the dance convene;
'And Youth's light ſtep in ſearch of Pleaſure ſtrays,
'And his fond eyes on Beauty fix their gaze.
'Shouldſt thou then, lingering midſt the lovely train,
'Wiſh ſome young Charmer's eaſy heart to gain,

‘ Mark well, that Reaſon Love's purſuit approve,
‘ Ere thy ſoft arts her tender paſſions move:
‘ Elſe, though thy thoughts in Summer regions range,
‘ Calm ſunny climes that ſeem to fear no change;
‘ Rude Winter's rage will ſoon the ſcene deform,
‘ Dark with thick cloud, and rough with battering ſtorm!
‘ When parents interdict, and friends diſſuade,
‘ The prudent cenſure, and the proud upbraid;
‘ Think, all their efforts then ſhalt thou diſdain,
‘ Thy faith thy conſtancy, unmov'd, maintain.—
‘ To Iſca's fields, me once Ill-fortune led;
‘ In Iſca's fields, her flocks ZELINDA fed:
‘ There oft, when Ev'ning, on the ſilent plain,
‘ Commenc'd with ſweet ſerenity her reign,
‘ Along green groves, or down the winding dales,
‘ The Fair-one liſten'd to my tender tales;
‘ Then when her mind, or doubt, or fear, diſtreſt,
‘ And doubt, or fear, her anxious eyes expreſt,
“ O no!” ſaid I, “ let oxen quit the mead,
“ With climbing goats on craggy cliffs to feed;
“ Before the hare the hound affrighted fly,
“ And larks purſue the falcon through the ſky;

“ Streams

" Streams ceaſe to flow, and winds to ſtir the lake,
" If I, unfaithful, ever thee forſake!"—
' What my tongue utter'd then, my heart believ'd:
' O wretched heart, ſelf-flatter'd and deceiv'd!
' Fell Slander's arts the Virgin's fame accus'd;
' And whom my love had choſe, my pride refus'd.
' For me, that cheek did tears of grief diſtain?
' To me, that voice in anguiſh plead in vain?
' What fiend relentleſs then my ſoul poſſeſt?
' Oblivion, hide! for ever hide the reſt!
' Too well her innocence and truth were prov'd;
' Too late my pity and my juſtice mov'd!'—
He ceas'd, with groans that more than words expreſt;
And ſmote in agony his aged breaſt.
His friend reply'd not; but, with ſoothing ſtrains
Of ſolemn muſic, ſought to eaſe his pains:
Soft flow'd the notes, as gales that waft perfume
From cowſlip meads, or linden boughs in bloom.
Peace o'er their minds a calm compoſure caſt;
And ſlowly down the ſhadowy vale, in penſive mood they paſt.

FINIS.